

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, FR, US

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO SECRETARY'S NATIONAL PRESS
CLUB SPEECH

1. MAJORITY OF PARIS NEWSPAPERS TODAY CARRIED STRAIGHT ACCOUNTS OF SECRETARY'S FEBRUARY 3 SPEECH. NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS WERE FIGARO, QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS, AND FRANCE-SOIR, THE LATTER TWO PUBLISHING HIGHLY CRITICAL COMMENTARY.
2. FIGARO, UNDER A HEADLINE IMPLYING THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD PRESENT HIS PROGRAM PERSONALLY TO THE IEA MEETING IN PARIS FEBRUARY 5, HIGHLIGHTED THE PROPOSAL FOR A PRICE FLOOR ON OIL. IT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE PRODUCER COUNTRIES ARE NOT DROPPING THEIR GUARD BUT WILL BE RAISING "THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE DROP OF THE DOLLAR" IN ALGIERS ON FEBRUARY 18.
3. UNDER THE BANNER "THE AMERICAN OIL CHALLENGE", LE QUOTIDIEN'S RICHARD LISCIA SAID THAT CONTRARY TO THE PROMISES OF CONCERTED ACTION MADE AT MARTINIQUE, THE

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SECRETARY "OFFERS THE OIL PRODUCING STATES A CHOICE --

EITHER A RELATIVE REDUCTION OF PRICES ALLOWING AN EVENTUAL COMMERCIAL STABILITY -- OR A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT POLICY THAT WOULD ENTAIL A DRASTIC REDUCTION OF CONSUMPTION AND THE COLLAPSE OF PRICES GISCARD CAME BACK FROM MARTINIQUE WITH THE CONVICTION THAT HE HAD WON MR. FORD TO HIS VIEWS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE JUST SET HIM STRAIGHT BY STATING WITHOUT ANY POSSIBLE DOUBT HIS DETERMINATION TO UNITE THE WESTERN FRONT UNDER THE AMERICAN BANNER BEFORE ANY DIALOGUE WITH PRODUCERS. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT DID NOT FLINCH BEFORE THE THREATS FROM MESSRS. FORD AND KISSINGER WHO REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO A POSSIBLE MILITARY INTERVENTION. WILL IT ONCE AGAIN FEIGN TO IGNORE WHAT FUNDAMENTALLY OPPOSES IT TO THE GOVERNMENT? THERE IS REASON TO FEAR THAT THE OPEC COUNTRIES, WHICH UP TO NOW HAVE RESPONDED WITH RESTRAINT TO AMERICAN THREATS, WILL NOW BE TEMPTED TO STAKE THEIR ALL IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE SCHEME OUTLINED BY MR. KISSINGER FROM MATERIALIZING: TO REDUCE THEIR PRODUCTION, TO CONSOLIDATE PRICES AND TO MAKE THEIR OIL SCARCE WHILE THEIR CUSTOMERS STILL NEED IT".

4. GABRIEL FARKAS OF FRANCE-SOIR COMMENTED, "IF THE AMERICANS WISH THAT PLAN TO SERVE AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION AT THE TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE PROPOSED BY GISCARD, IT IS NOT WITHOUT ULTERIOR MOTIVES. THE PLAN IN EFFECT WILL PLACE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN A DIFFICULT POSITION BECAUSE BY ACCEPTING THE IDEA OF A PROTECTED PRICE, MR. GISCARD WOULD LOSE THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGES WHICH HE ENJOYS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF HIS REFUSAL TO JOIN THE BLOC OF CONSUMERS THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT WHICH FRANCE COULD OPPOSE TO KISSINGER CONCERNS THE IMPLICATIONS WHICH HIS PLAN MIGHT HAVE CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE U.S. A EUROPEAN REALITY NOW EXISTS BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENTS OF SIX COUNTRIES ONE DAY DECIDED TO SET COMMON FARM PRICES. COMMON OIL PRICES IN THE FUTURE COULD GIVE SOME REALITY TO AN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY WITH MECHANISMS FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SOLIDARITY. SUCH A PERSPECTIVE DOUBTLESS IS HARDLY COMPATIBLE WITH THE GAULLIST HERITAGE WHICH GISCARD USES AS A REFERENCE.

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THIS IS THE KISSINGER BOMB."

5. SOME FRENCH RADIO COMMENTATORS, TOO, SE THE KISSINGER PROPOSALS AS TROUBLING TO FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. EUROPE NO. 1 LABELLED THE SPEECH "THE END OF THE FRANCO-AMERICAN TRUCE AGREED UPON AT MARTINIQUE".
RUSH

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